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ABSTRACT

This document contains a variety of information sheets developed from a survey completed on behalf of the Family Research Council to explore the family attitudes of American adults (N=1,100). The top 10 findings from the 1993 Family Issues Survey are enumerated on a summary sheet. Following this summary, each of the top 10 findings is discussed individually on an "In Focus" sheet. "In Focus" sheets deal with these findings: (1) most Americans believe that the family is eroding, not merely changing; (2) African-Americans are the segment of American society most likely to believe children today have it rougher than their parents did when they were children; (3) most Americans value "traditional family values" more than tolerance for nontraditional lifestyles; (4) 9 out of 10 dual-earner couples believe mother at home is better than day care; (5) most workers would trade early retirement tomorrow for family time today; (6) by a two-to-one margin, Americans prefer low taxes to big government; (7) Perot voters could be a key education reform constituency; (8) veering left on social issues would hurt the Republican party in 1996; (9) most believe Dan Quayle was right: kids do fare best in two-parent families; and (10) consensus is possible on family issues if Americans put children first. (NB)

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# TOP 10 FINDINGS FROM FRC'S 1993 FAMILY ISSUES SURVEY

10. **Most Americans believe the family is eroding -- not merely "changing."**

9. **African-Americans are the segment of American society most likely to believe that children today have it rougher than their parents did when they were children.**

8. **Most Americans value "traditional family values" more than "tolerance" for non-traditional lifestyles.**

7. **Nine out of 10 dual-earner couples believe mother care is better for kids than day care.**

6. **Most workers would trade early retirement tomorrow for family time today.**

5. **Most Americans would rather have lower taxes and fewer government services than higher taxes and more government services.**

4. **Perot voters could be a key education reform constituency.**

3. **Veering left on social issues would hurt the GOP in 1996.**

2. **Most Americans believe Dan Quayle was right: kids do fare best in two-parent families.**

1. **Consensus on family issues is possible if Americans consistently put children first.**

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In Focus

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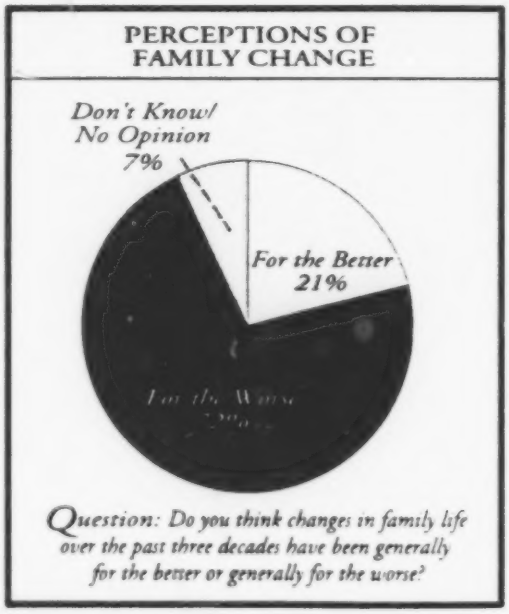
# MOST AMERICANS BELIEVE FAMILY IS ERODING, NOT MERELY CHANGING

Seventy-two percent of Americans surveyed say changes in family life over the past three decades "have been generally for the worse," according to a new poll commissioned by the Family Research Council. Sixty percent believe "children are generally worse off today" than when they were children, and 66 percent say "children are no longer safe at their school or at play in their neighborhood."

Concerns about the direction of family trends are highest among middle-income college graduates: 91 percent say changes in family life have been for the worse. Concern is also high among divorcees, minorities, single-earner married couples, families with three or more children, and frequent church-goers.


PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILY CHANGE
Don't Know/ No Opinion 7%
For the Better 21%
Question: Do you think changes in family life over the past three decades have been generally for the better or generally for the worse?

More than half (52%) of all men believe children are "worse off" today than when they were growing up. But this level is considerably below women (68% of whom believe children today are "worse off"). This gender gap (which has been found on similar questions asked in Gallup and ABC News/ Washington Post surveys) is believed to be a reflection of the fact that men are typically less involved than women in the day-to-day lives of children and more likely than women to view questions of well-being from an economic perspective.

The FRC survey was conducted by the Voter/Consumer Research firm during September, 1993. The survey had a sample of 1100 randomly-selected adults. The poll's margin for error is plus or minus three percentage points.

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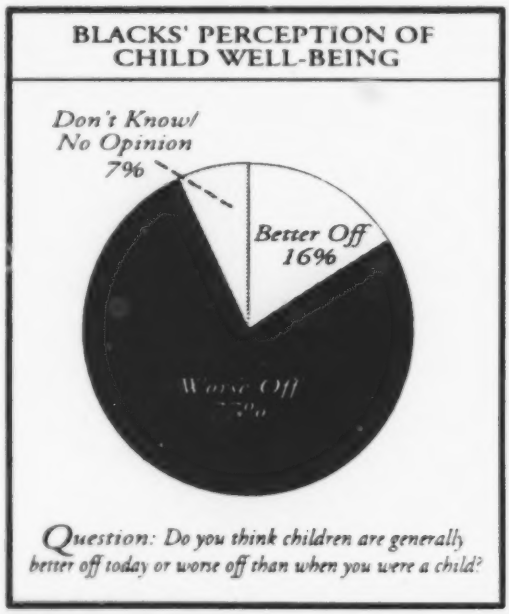
# BLACKS MOST LIKELY TO BELIEVE CHILDREN TODAY HAVE IT ROUGHER THAN THEIR PARENTS DID

African-Americans are more likely than any other group in America to believe that recent changes in American life have harmed children, according to a new national survey commissioned by the Family Research Council. When asked, "Do you think children are generally better off today or worse off than when you were a child," 60 of all Americans - - and 77 percent of all black Americans - - say children today are "worse off."

While African-American sentiment may seem surprising in light of racial progress and civil rights gains, these findings are generally consistent with the findings of a 1992 survey conducted by the Lawrence Research firm which found that the percentage of blacks that said they believe "their grandparents were happier than they are" was 15 points higher than the general population.


BLACKS' PERCEPTION OF CHILD WELL-BEING
Don't Know/ No Opinion 7%
Better Off 16%
Worse Off
Question: Do you think children are generally better off today or worse off than when you were a child?

Moreover, 69 percent of the African-Americans surveyed in the new FRC poll say that changes in family life over the past three decades generally have been "for the worse." Only 26 percent believe changes have been "for the better."

Poor schools appear to be one factor influencing black concerns about children. While 51 percent of all Americans say "parents should be given government-funded school vouchers so they can send their children to the public, private, or religious school of their choice," 61 percent of African-Americans support school choice. Crime appears to be another factor influencing minority concerns about children. Sixty-six percent of the African-Americans surveyed believe that "children are no longer safe at their school or at play in their neighborhood."

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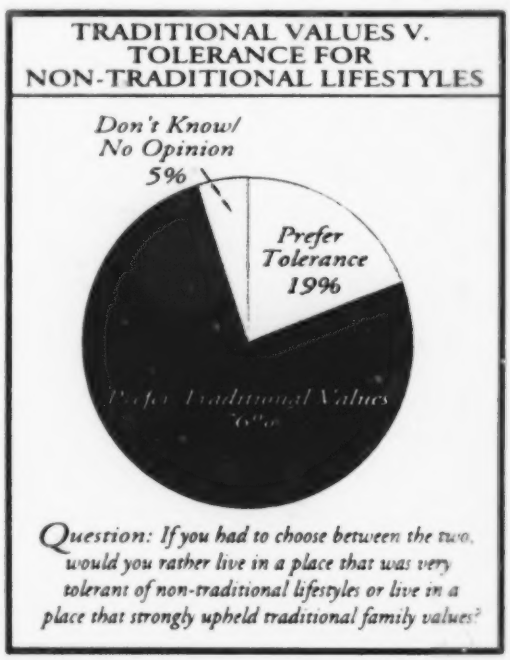
# MOST AMERICANS VALUE 'TRADITIONAL VALUES' MORE THAN TOLERANCE

By a margin of 76 percent to 19 percent, Americans would rather live in a place "that strongly upholds traditional family values" than a place "that is very tolerant of non-traditional lifestyles," according to a new poll conducted by the Family Research Council.

Preference for traditional values is found among every demographic group. While blacks (86%) and Hispanics (81%) are among the groups most likely to support traditional family values, even atheists and people who never attend church favor traditional values by a 58 to 31 percent margin.

Not surprisingly, there is a strong correlation between family status and support for traditional values. Marrieds (85%) are more likely to prefer traditionalism than never-marrieds (65%), and parents (82%) are more likely to prefer traditional values than non-parents (64%). These "family gaps" overshadow a more modest "generation gap": support for traditional values is roughly nine points higher among people age 45 and above than among people under 45.


TRADITIONAL VALUES V. TOLERANCE FOR NON-TRADITIONAL LIFESTYLES
Don't Know/ No Opinion 5%
Prefer Tolerance 19%
Prefer Traditional Values 76%
Question: If you had to choose between the two, would you rather live in a place that was very tolerant of non-traditional lifestyles or live in a place that strongly upheld traditional family values?

Americans' preference for traditional values can also be seen in responses to a question asking people to rate the impact on children of six social institutions. Americans give their highest ratings to "churches" and "youth organizations like the Boy Scouts" - - the two institutions most likely to help parents communicate to children conventional standards of right and wrong. "Schools" and "day care" rank third and fourth respectively, while "the entertainment industry" and "the federal government" are viewed most negatively.

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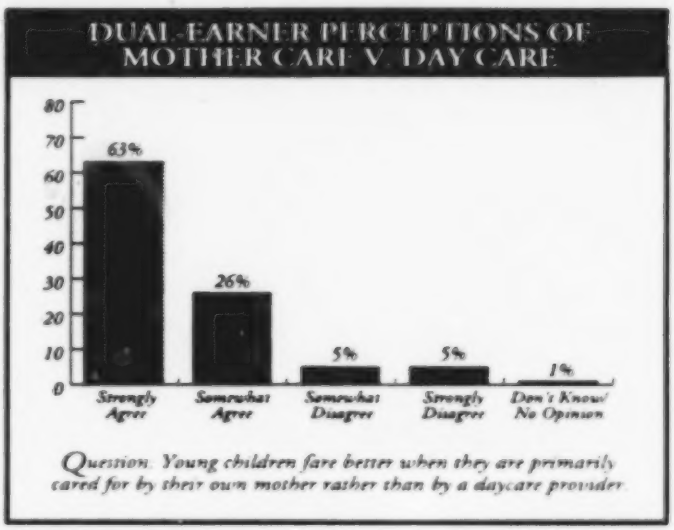
# 9 OUT OF 10 DUAL-EARNER COUPLES BELIEVE MOTHER AT HOME BETTER THAN DAY CARE

Roughly nine out of 10 (89%) dual-earner married couples believe "young children fare better when they are primarily cared for by their own mother rather than by a day care provider," according to a new survey commissioned by the Family Research Council.

That two-earner households lack enthusiasm for day care helps to explain why so many couples have adopted "tag-team" arrangements and other family-based strategies for minimizing the time that young children spend in day care. (According to the most recent Census Bureau report, only half of all preschool children with employed mothers - - and three in ten overall - - are primarily cared for by a day care provider.)




Generally, Americans share the concern of two-earner couples about day care. In the FRC poll, 87 percent of the American public agree that young children benefit more from mother care than substitute care.

Not surprisingly, support for day care is strongest among never-marrieds and non-parents and weakest among Hispanics, frequent church-goers, and conservatives. Interestingly, conservatives who identified themselves as political "independents" are more likely to prefer mother care than conservatives who identify themselves as "Republicans."

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# MOST WORKERS WOULD TRADE EARLY RETIREMENT TOMORROW FOR FAMILY TIME TODAY

Most workers would be willing to give up the opportunity to retire early in order to have more time to devote to family life, according to a new poll commissioned by the Family Research Council. When asked to choose between two different strategies for organizing work and family responsibilities over the life cycle, 57 percent say they would rather pace themselves like a distance runner ("work fewer hours while raising children and postpone retirement until age 70") than dash and crash like a sprinter ("work more hours while raising children and be able to retire at age 60").

Not surprisingly, women (64%) and parents with children still at home (63%) are especially likely to favor the distance runner's pace. This strategy also appeals strongly to middle-income college graduates (65%) and - - interestingly - - to singles under the age of 35 (63%).

Conversely, the sprinter's strategy draws its strongest support from men (44%), blacks (47%), and the unemployed (48%).

These findings suggest that the public might support efforts to raise the retirement age if they were linked to policies (such as pro-family tax relief) designed to ease the time and money pressures on parents with children at home. Moreover, these findings suggest that proposals (like the Clinton health plan) which simultaneously encourage early retirement and increase the economic burdens on younger Americans are potentially vulnerable on this point.

**WORK & FAMILY STRATEGIES OVER THE LIFE CYCLE**

*Question: If you had to choose between the two, would you rather work fewer hours while raising your children and postpone retirement until age 70 or work more hours while raising your children and be able to retire at age 60?*

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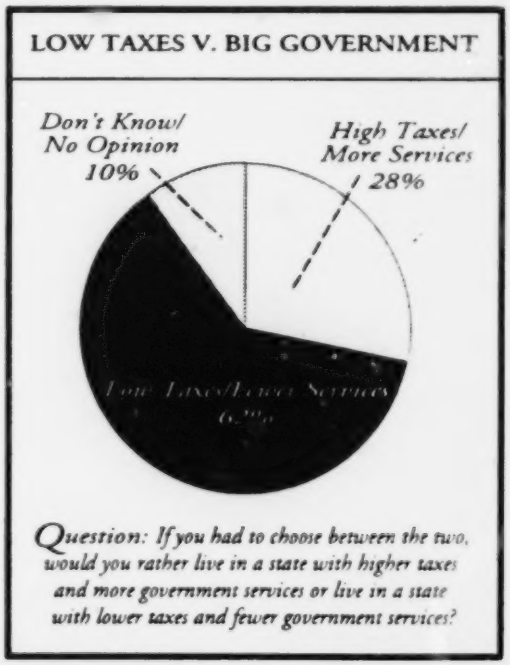
# BY 2 TO 1 MARGIN, AMERICANS PREFER LOW TAXES TO BIG GOVERNMENT

By a margin of 61 percent to 28 percent, Americans say they would rather "live in a state with lower taxes and fewer government services" than a state with "higher taxes and more government services," according to a new poll commissioned by the Family Research Council.

Not surprisingly, ideology appears to be the most significant factor influencing responses to this question. Preference for Big Government is low among conservative independents (11%) and Perot voters (18%), and high among Clinton voters (41%) and liberal Democrats (48%).


LOW TAXES V. BIG GOVERNMENT
Don't Know/
No Opinion
10%
High Taxes/
More Services
28%
Low Taxes/Fewer Services
62%
Question: If you had to choose between the two, would you rather live in a state with higher taxes and more government services or live in a state with lower taxes and fewer government services?

An examination of other demographic subgroups reveals some interesting - - and often surprising - - results. For example, preference for "lower taxes and fewer services" is higher among middle-income college graduates than among more affluent Americans. Moreover, the gap between rich and poor is no different from the gap between men and women.

This "gender gap" is primarily due to a split between older men and younger women. Men 45 and over prefer "low taxes/less services" by a margin of more than 4 to 1 (72% to 17%). Conversely, women under 45 prefer "low taxes/less services" by a margin of only 3 to 2 (56% to 35%).

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# PEROT VOTERS COULD BE A KEY EDUCATION REFORM CONSTITUENCY

A clear, but fragile, majority of Americans support alternatives to the public school system, according to a new poll commissioned by the Family Research Council. By a margin of 51 percent to 41 percent, Americans believe "parents should be given government-funded vouchers so they can send their children to the public, private, or religious school of their choice." By a similar 50-43 percent margin, Americans believe "parents should be free to educate their children at home instead of sending them to school."

Interestingly, each of these reform ideas pulls its strongest support from very different constituencies. Home schooling draws its strongest support from Perot voters (64%), middle-income college graduates (63%), Protestants who attend services at least once a week (59%), and political independents (57%). Vouchers are most strongly favored by Hispanics (63%), Catholics (63%), and blacks (61%).

Support for both reform ideas is strong among parents with children at home (of whom 57% support vouchers and 56% support home schooling) and among people under age 35 (of whom 58% support vouchers and 55% support home schooling). Conversely, people age 65 and above are less enthusiastic about alternatives to the public schools: only 44% support vouchers and 43% support home schooling.

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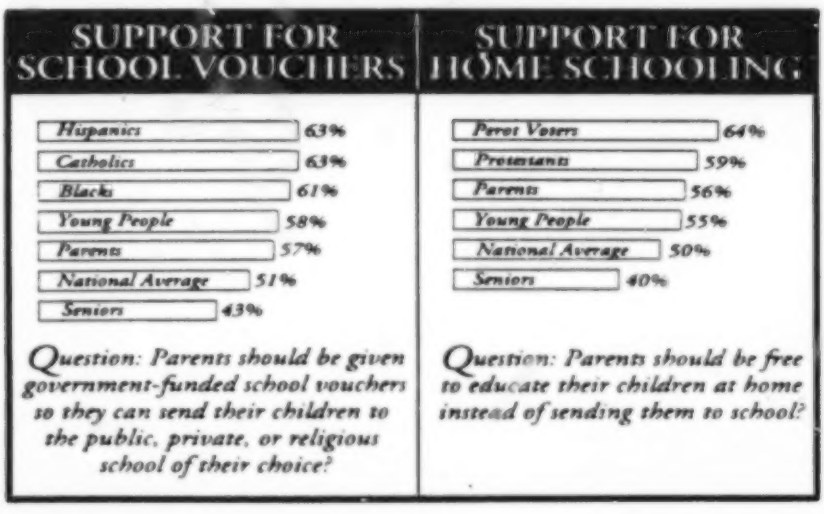
SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL VOUCHERS
Hispanics 63%
Catholics 63%
Blacks 61%
Young People 58%
Parents 57%
National Average 51%
Seniors 43%
Question: Parents should be given government-funded school vouchers so they can send their children to the public, private, or religious school of their choice?
SUPPORT FOR HOME SCHOOLING
Perot Voters 64%
Protestants 59%
Parents 56%
Young People 55%
National Average 50%
Seniors 40%
Question: Parents should be free to educate their children at home instead of sending them to school?

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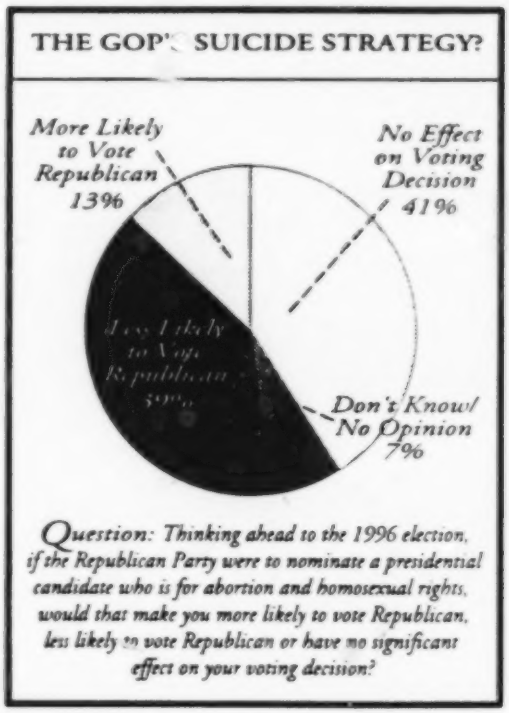
# VEERING LEFT ON SOCIAL ISSUES WOULD HURT GOP IN 1996

If the Republican party nominates a 1996 presidential candidate that favors abortion and homosexual rights, the GOP could lose substantial support at the ballot box. According to a new poll commissioned by the Family Research Council, 39 percent of the American public - - and 52 percent of those who voted for Bush - - say they would be less likely to vote Republican if the party's 1996 presidential nominee "is for abortion and homosexual rights." Only 13 percent say nominating a socially liberal candidate would make them "more likely to vote Republican." (Forty-one percent say their voting preference would be unaffected by such a move.)

Interestingly, conservative independents (51%), conservative Democrats (46%), and Perot voters (43%) have higher-than-average objections to a GOP nominee favoring abortion and homosexual rights. This fact - - along with other data showing common ground between social conservatives and Perot voters on other issues (support for low taxes, education reform, etc.) - - suggests that if the 1996 GOP Convention were to nominate a socially liberal candidate, it could give an opening to a reform-minded, pro-family populist candidate to bring together conservative Republicans, blue-collar Catholics, former Perot supporters, and other disaffected voters.


THE GOP'S SUICIDE STRATEGY?
More Likely to Vote Republican 13%
No Effect on Voting Decision 41%
Less Likely to Vote Republican 39%
Don't Know/ No Opinion 7%

*Question: Thinking ahead to the 1996 election, if the Republican Party were to nominate a presidential candidate who is for abortion and homosexual rights, would that make you more likely to vote Republican, less likely to vote Republican or have no significant effect on your voting decision?*

Obviously, any reform candidacy would face tall odds. But the outcome of the recent Canadian election (in which a pro-family populist Reform Party dramatically surpassed the reigning Conservative Party) should discourage GOP party officials from being led astray by a fringe element committed to cultural liberalism.

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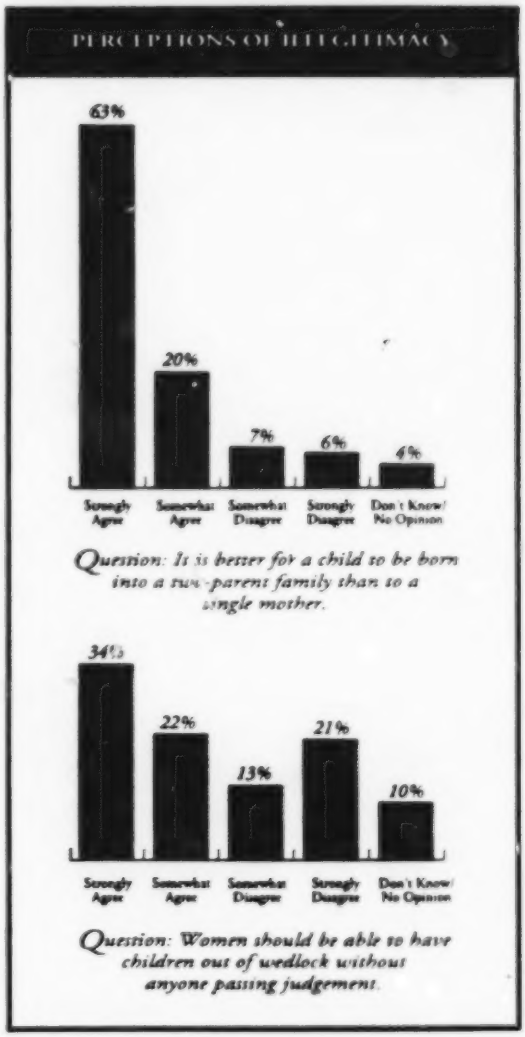
# MOST BELIEVE DAN QUAYLE WAS RIGHT: KIDS DO FARE BEST IN TWO-PARENT FAMILIES

Eighty-three percent of the American public agree with former Vice President Dan Quayle that "it is better for a child to be born into a two-parent family than to a single mother," according to a new poll commissioned by the Family Research Council. But 56 percent also say that "women should be able to have children out of wedlock without anyone passing judgement."

Older Americans are much more likely to consistently oppose illegitimacy than younger Americans. Among 18-34 year olds, 70 percent believe women should be free to bear children out of wedlock without reproach. Only 29 percent of Americans age 55 and above take this view.

The dramatic generational differences point to a sea change in the public perception of childbearing. Most older Americans continue to view childbearing as a moral act which has certain moral boundaries; conversely, many young Americans apparently see childbearing as more of a lifestyle option governed by personal preferences. While most younger Americans clearly view the decision to bear children in wedlock as preferable, they are far less likely than older Americans to view illegitimacy as "immoral."

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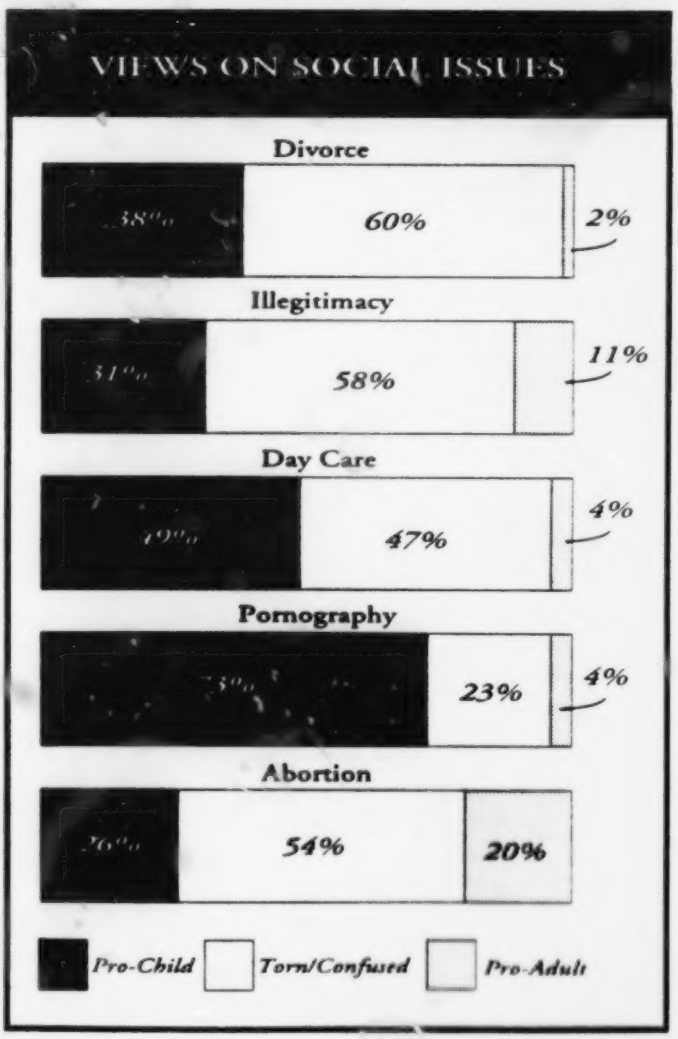
# CONSENSUS POSSIBLE ON FAMILY ISSUES IF AMERICANS PUT CHILDREN FIRST

Many of the most contentious "family" issues of our time - - divorce, illegitimacy, day care, pornography, abortion - - represent a clash between the needs of children and the apparent interests of adults. Public attitudes about these issues are greatly influenced by whether Americans view these issues from a child's perspective or from an adult's perspective. Indeed, in a new poll commissioned by the Family Research Council, survey responses vary widely depending on how each of these five issues are framed.

For example, when asked to view these issues through the eyes of children, most Americans take a pro-child stance: 93 percent believe "children suffer when their parents divorce," 83 percent believe "it is better for a child to be born into a two-parent family than to a single mother," 87 percent perceive that "young children fare better when they are primarily cared for by their own mother rather than by a day care provider," 84 percent think "children are harmed by the presence of sexually explicit materials and adult entertainment in our society," and 64 percent believe "unborn children should have the right to life."




But when the very same people are asked to view these same five issues through the eyes of adults, the response is

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quite different: 51 percent say "married couples should seek a divorce if their marriage isn't working," 56 percent believe "women should be able to have children out of wedlock without anyone passing judgment," 27 percent say that "soon after giving birth to a child, a married woman should resume her career and put her child in day care," 14 percent believe "there should be no restrictions on sexually explicit materials and entertainment," and 67 percent say "women should have the right to choose to have an abortion."

Taken together, the results indicate that America is loosely divided into three groups on most cultural questions: (1) those who consistently take a pro-child position; (2) those who consistently take a pro-adult position; and (3) those who are deeply torn or confused on these issues. The size and distribution of these three groups varies somewhat from issue to issue. For example, parents with children are much more apt to take a consistently pro-child position than non-parents, particularly never-marrieds. This "family gap" holds up even when controlling for age and other variables, a fact which suggests that the experience of raising children has a significant impact on people's attitudes.

The implication of these results is that many family issues that divide Americans could be resolved if people were to consistently agree that the needs of children supersede the preferences of adults. The key, then, to resolving these issues is building a public consensus that Americans should give paramount consideration to the needs of children - - that Americans, in short, should "put children first."

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